

THE SCOTTISH CHURCH'S STRUGGLE WITH ENGLAND for INDEPENDENCE

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I

FROM the death of St. Mungo in the year 603 till the appointment of John in 1115 to be Bishop of Glasgow, there is a gulf of over five hundred years of silence regarding Church affairs in that diocese. Among the first things that engaged the attention of John, and finally wore him out, was the claim made by the See of York of supremacy over Glasgow. It is not easy to understand that claim without turning over a few pages of history.

When the Britons were driven northward, Dumbarton became a Cymric stronghold, and Strathclyde was thereafter established as Cymric territory. It remained so through the period of keenly intensified national feeling which kindled the Arthurian legends. Some of King Arthur's victories were undoubtedly won in districts which were then as Cymric as Wales, though they were in what is now called Scotland.

The British Christians, as everyone knows, had religious customs of their own, and also ideas of their own about church buildings, which they made of wood or wattle-daub, because they believed that "here we have no abiding city." Bede says of the church which Ninian built that it was called the "candida casa" because it was of stone, after a manner which was strange to the Britons. He also tells how Columba, before he came to Iona and builded a monastery there, had erected another at Dearnach. Out of these monasteries came thenceforth those faithful souls that multiplied similar buildings in Britain and Ireland. It was a bishop from Ireland that consecrated St. Mungo.

King Oswald of Northumbria asked for a bishop from Scotland as he himself had learned of the sacraments and faith during his exile among the Scots. Thereafter many went from Scotland to the provinces of the Angles, baptizing and teaching. Aidan received under his care all the provinces and races of Britain; and was succeeded by Finan, who was also from Iona. Aidan's church at Lindisfarne was of the early kind. His successor, we are told, made a church befitting the See, yet "after the manner of the Scots, not of stone but wholly of hewn oak and covered with reeds." Bede also refers to the difference in the observation of Easter, which was one of the marks of the Celtic Church. He speaks of

Aidan, who, of course, adhered to this, as being either ignorant of the canonical law regarding it, or prevailed upon by the authority of his own Church.

When Columbanus in the year 590 was, with his little band of followers, interfered with in Gaul on the ground of the differences between their ritual and customs and those of the Romish churchmen, he protested to Pope Boniface IV. While acknowledging that the jurisdiction of the Pope was supreme within the bounds of the Roman Empire, he asserted the right of his own nation to follow the custom of their fathers even though he was temporarily within Papal territory. He said, "We are followers of Saints Peter and Paul and all the disciples, and of those who wrote the divine Scriptures under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. We are Western folk and dwellers in the most remote part of the world, and we accept no doctrine except that of the evangelists and apostles." He quoted the second canon of the Council of Constantinople of the year 383, which said: "The churches that are not within the Roman Empire shall be governed by their own ancient customs." It was held, however, that as the British Church was at that time within the Roman Empire this did not justify him—an argument which did not cover his case, as the Roman imperial invasion did not touch Ireland.

The Roman Church entered Britain as an invading force, and spread its emissaries northward, till disputes inevitably began when those who had come from Kent or France encountered the Celtic missionaries working among the English. Ronan, who was a Scot but converted to Roman usages through his training in France or Italy, vainly tried to influence Finan in the matter of submission to the methods of Rome; but he only whipped him into greater obstinacy. Finan was succeeded by Colman. Oswy, the king, stood by the Scottish tradition, but his son Aldfrid having been taught otherwise by Wilfrid of York was opposed to it, and gave Wilfrid a site at Ripon for a monastery. Thereupon the Scots who were there, left, rather than surrender the principles of their church.

The Council at Whitby in 664, convened for the discussion of differences, did not settle the quarrel, though it gave the victory to the Romish point of view. King Oswy and his son Colman, and the Scottish clerics, the Abbess Hilda and her followers, with Bishop Cedd of the East Saxons, were on the side of the Scottish Church. But Ethelbert, Bishop of the West Saxons, with Wilfrid and others, opposed. On behalf of the Scottish custom, Colman pleaded tradition, the authority of St. John, the practice of Columba, as well as the doctrine of Anatolius; against all which Wilfrid set the Council of Nicæa, and the weight of Rome and Romish Christendom. He sneered at the authority of Columba, and finally clinched his case for Rome's supremacy by quoting Peter as being the keeper of the gate of heaven. Fear of this plea carried the day with the

king, who thought it prudent to be on the sunny side of the favour of the man who had the keys ! Colman and those with him declined submission to Rome and turned homeward. All the Scots elsewhere either followed that example or surrendered. Wilfrid thereafter administered the episcopate of York and Northumbria, and wherever Oswy could extend his kingdom. His influence was therefore the fruit of conquering force.

Bede tells that about the year 686 Strathclyde had accepted the Romish customs and rites. Adamnan, having been converted to the same forms when sent as a delegate to the Angles, endeavoured, on his return to Iona, to win over the Church there but failed. It was not till the year 718 that, as Tighernac says, " the coronal tonsure was put upon the family of Iona."

II

So long as the Scottish Church kept its own rites and customs there could be no question of supremacy to any external authority. It was not till the Church of Rome, entering Scotland for conquest, prevailed, that such a claim could arise, and with it a claim over the sovereign himself.

In the year 1107 Turgot, from Durham, was chosen by Henry, the English king, for the bishopric of St. Andrews, " in which church is the seat of the Primate of the whole Scottish nation." The ordination was, however, postponed, York demanding, as by right, the ordination and subjection of the Primate of the Scots, while the Church of St. Andrews denied that either through antiquity or custom did she owe that subjection.

Further, the Bishop of York himself had not yet been consecrated ; and the Bishop of Durham proposed to proceed with the Scottish ceremony in presence of York, assisted by the bishops of Scotland and the Orkney Isles. But Canterbury declined to allow this until York had been consecrated. He wrote, " I neither counsel nor concede it. Indeed, I forbid it before the consecration of the Archbishop-elect, unless by me, if necessity should demand it." Thomas of York, having been consecrated in due time, proceeded on the same day with the consecration of Turgot by command of King Henry I of England, on the request of Alexander I of Scotland. There was, however, no demand of any specified subjection except to the authority of either Church, King Henry enjoining that a just conclusion should later decide the controversy on either side, York, however, declaring that Turgot had made submission to him. Here we have the Scottish king acknowledging meantime the superiority in ecclesiastical matters, in his own kingdom of Scotland, not only of the Archbishop of York, but of the King of England.

The appointment was far from happy, and Turgot was glad to leave

Scotland, going to Paris for advice from Pope Paschal II, thereafter returning to Durham, and dying there in 1115.

King Alexander wrote to Archbishop Ranulf of Canterbury expressing his great grief over the death of Turgot, and his own "obeisance and devoted fidelity," and asking for advice. He mentions a previous communication in which he stated that in ancient times the bishops of St. Andrews were not consecrated except by the Pope or Canterbury. This they had held to, until Archbishop Lanfranc had in the king's absence passed on the right to Thomas of York, a thing which Alexander would not permit, "being supported, if you please, by your authority." He asked that the monk Edmer of Canterbury might be sent North to become Bishop of St. Andrews. This request was passed on to King Henry who gave his permission. Ranulf had just returned from abroad in 1120 when Alexander's emissaries came—the prior of Dunfermline, two priests and a knight.

In the previous year Pope Calixtus II, apparently at the instigation of Thurstan, Archbishop of York, wrote to the bishops of Scotland, styling them "suffragans of the Church of York," and saying that he had heard of a presumption on their part that one bishop might be consecrated by another without consultation with their Metropolitan. He refers them to the decision of the Council of Nicæa on the matter, and commands that none be consecrated save by their Metropolitan, the Archbishop of York, or by his permission. He demands that they submit to the Archbishop, as if to St. Peter, as they had been commanded by Archbishop Gerard and by Pope Paschal. Thurstan had just entered on his Archbishopric, and was evidently "riding the marches" of his office!

Ranulf had the highest opinion of Edmer, speaking of him as "a wise man," and "the treasure of his heart." He apparently anticipated interference, for he advises that there be no delay in the consecration, "lest what we fear should intervene, or what we should like ill."

Edmer came, and received the episcopate of St. Andrews, "the clergy and the people of the land electing him, and the king consenting"—an interesting sidelight on the method used. The ceremony was so performed that he was neither invested by the king with pastoral ring nor staff, nor did homage to him. Next day, however, the king expressed to Edmer his objection to any subjection to York. Edmer said that he had heard that, from of old, the authority of Canterbury was over the whole of Britain, and accordingly proposed that the benediction of Canterbury should be asked. The king, however, objected to the Church of Canterbury being placed in priority to the Church of St. Andrews in his kingdom. In the subsequent strife over the question Archbishop Thurstan, having got the English king to demand that York should consecrate Edmer, the latter suggested that the advice of Archbishop Ranulf should be asked ;

but the king declared that Edmer had been wholly released from Canterbury, and had no part in her at all ; and that he would never consent to a Scottish bishop being subject to the Archbishop of Canterbury or any other. This Edmer could not accept ; and so the quarrel continued between him and Alexander, till, as he wrote, " when zeal for God and desire for the safety of his own soul " compelled him to leave Scotland, he finally resigned his episcopate, and " returned to his own place," to wit, Canterbury. He died in 1123, having in the previous year written to King Alexander, offering to return on peace-making terms.

Alexander's attitude shewed how the wind was blowing in Scotland, and it was to come further afield.

III

David, while Prince of Cumbria, had restored, or erected the See of Glasgow, on Roman lines, in the year 1115. He appointed his tutor John to be its bishop ; and John began to build a church in 1123. Next year King Alexander died, and David, his brother, succeeded him.

In 1122 Archbishop Thurstan demanded of John profession and subjection. This John refused to give. Thurstan, being enraged at the opposition of the supporters of Canterbury, accused the bishop of Glasgow and the bishops of Scotland of having withdrawn themselves from the Church of York, and so insulted the king of England himself. He therefore suspended John from his episcopal office. John went at once to Rome ; but his appeal there was futile. He passed on thence to Jerusalem. Pope Calixtus II wrote rebuking him for his contumacy towards York, " in whose Chapter thou wast elected her suffragan." He commanded immediate submission to Thurstan, otherwise the sentence of deposition would be ratified. He also wrote to King Alexander that " because of the presumption of the Scottish bishops that they could consecrate one another, and how on behalf of Archbishop Thurstan he had written already to the king, without avail, he demands instant submission to the Metropolitan, the Archbishop of York, and commands " them, and thee thyself," to obey that dignitary " as father and teacher." Not a bad pill, ungilded, for a king of Scotland to swallow ! He wrote again, also in no uncertain tone to " all the bishops throughout Scotland, suffragans of the Church of York " reminding them of his previous communication, and ordering bishops-elect to go and receive the Metropolitan's consent else their consecration shall be held to be void. If they disobey he will execute " canonical justice " upon them. He also told Thurstan, who seemed to have got perfect access to his will, of bishop John's visit, and his petitions, labouring, " by great persistence in prayers and in several

ways," for liberation from that which Thurstan had demanded of him ; nevertheless for the sake of the dignity of the Church of York, and for Thurstan's own sake, he has given no heed to John's supplications, words, and promises. And now John, without the permission or knowledge of the Pope, had gone to Jerusalem ! It was evident that this John was a stubborn fellow, and his going to Jerusalem plainly meant to convey to Thurstan that he might "go to Jericho !" But, unless he had the proverbial long spoon, he might find himself supping bitter pottage. The Pope warns him of this, writing to him that King Alexander's influence and prayers "have for some time prevailed in securing for him respite, in order that he might return and submit to Thurstan of York." He now gives him thirty days' grace, from the receipt of this letter, to return and make submission. Otherwise the sentence of deposition holds.

In this connection it is interesting to see some of the arguments of both Canterbury and York. In a letter to Pope Calixtus, Ranulf of Canterbury wrote of the bishop of Glasgow : "It is to be stated that he is a bishop of the ancient Britons, regarding whom it was decreed by the blessed Gregory that they should severally be subject to the Bishop of Canterbury. And, according to the tradition of the elders, the Bishop of the Church, down to the time of the Normans, used to be consecrated by the bishop of the Scots or of the Welsh Britons." And again, he says that Thomas II of York had ordained a certain Briton to be bishop of Glasgow ; and of this bishop it is fact that, if he was bishop of the ancient Britons, then, according to Gregory, he was a suffragan of Canterbury. And if, perchance, it be argued from the contiguity of the provinces and the changes of place and people, that he was a bishop of the Picts, yet still was he subject to Canterbury. Therefore, according to him, the bishop of Glasgow was under the Church of Canterbury. On the part of York it was alleged that Archbishop Thomas II had ordained a holy man named Michael to the See of Glasgow, who gave canonical obedience to York, and to Archbishop Thomas and his successors. It was claimed that Kinsi, Archbishop of York, who died in 1060, had consecrated Michael's predecessors Magsuen and John, receiving from them deeds of submission ; but that, "because of hostile invasion and the barbarity of the land, these, and other Church documents, charters, etc., were destroyed, and the church was without a pastor until Earl David (later King of Scotland) appointed Michael, aforesaid, as bishop, and sent him to be consecrated by Archbishop Thomas. Not only so, but he had also consecrated a bishop of Orkney, and his predecessors had done the same." In Raine's *York*, there is quoted a letter from Pope Paschal II, beginning, "Bishop Paschal, servant of the servants of God, to his honourable brethren, the suffragans throughout Scotland of the Metropolitan of York, greeting and apostolic benediction." He intimates his appointment of Gerard to the

See of York, and the granting to him of the pallium. "And therefore we instruct and command that you shew him henceforth due obedience as to your Archbishop."

There is no doubt that these statements are without historic foundation; and that the names mentioned are as much ghosts as were "John Doe" and "Richard Roe," put up for the sake of a legal argument. There is no authenticity of record between St. Mungo and the appointment of John by Prince David to the See of Glasgow.

In 1124, shortly before his death, King Alexander caused Robert, Prior of Scone, to be elected to the Bishopric of St. Andrews, but his ordination was for a time postponed because of the demands of Thurstan of York, which were repelled by the Scots. Next year, Cardinal John of Crema was sent as Legate, to go into the controversy, and, as Bishop John was still recalcitrant, Pope Honorius II got into touch with him, and issued his apostolic commands for obedience to York.

A Council was held in Rome in February 1126 regarding the dispute between Canterbury and York, and these churchmen were at Rome. There Thurstan saw Bishop John of Glasgow present in the flesh, and complained regarding his contumacy in face of the commands both of Pope Paschal and Pope Calixtus. He also complained of the bishops of Scotland, and how the Pope had been persuaded by certain men that Scotland was not a part of the kingdom of England. He resented the request from Scotland for a pallium, and that the Bishop of St. Andrews should become an Archbishop. He also, evidently to his own satisfaction and the Pope's, proved that Scotland was a part of England, and the king of Scotland a vassal of the king of England—that is to say, that the claim of the Church was co-extensive with a geographic boundary. The question of vassaldom was, of course, unanswerable as regards certain lands in England held by the kings of Scotland, but for these only.

Bishop John declined to reply, as he was present not as having been summoned but on an embassy from his sovereign. It was agreed that if a day were fixed, and others interested were present, the matter might be discussed. Canterbury and his followers bitterly opposed York, "unjustly claiming," we are told, "that the whole province of Britain was theirs." But the Pope smiled, shook his head, and said "Enough!" On the day fixed in February, 1127, he intimated to John that he was not freed from "those to whom Pope Calixtus had bound him," and summoned the Scottish bishops to appear.

Alexander having died, Robert, who had been appointed by him to St. Andrews, was, by request of King David, consecrated in 1128 by Thurstan of York, but was not allowed to profess subjection or submission to that Church or to its bishop, though he was a Canon of York.

In 1131 Bishop John was again commanded by Pope Innocent II to

submit to York, and the bishops of Scotland were also ordered to the same obedience, in confirmation of the orders of Calixtus and Honorius. His letter has some memorable phrases in it. He gives his reasons with clarity and dignity. "It is just that he who desires to rule others should by no means blush to be subject to those preferred before him, for obedience and humility are guardians of the virtues, but an arrogant and disobedient man incurs the wrath of God, and, becoming intolerable, drives from him his neighbour's love. Even as obedient and humble sons are to be cherished in the bosom of the Apostolic See, so conversely, those who are rebellious and proud are, in the strict rigour of justice, to be constrained by condign punishment."

Three years later, Pope Innocent pledged himself to Archbishop Thurstan, saying: "Concerning the oppressions and wrongs inflicted by the king of Scotland and by Bishop John of Glasgow, we sympathize with paternal affection, and, when the opportunity is granted us by the Lord, the Apostolic See will preserve to thee, and to that Church, her just right." In 1136 he tells York that he has commanded William, Archbishop of Canterbury, Legate of the Apostolic See, to pronounce the sentence of anathema against John, pseudo-bishop of Glasgow "until he be healed of his errors and return to the metropolitan right and subjection to thee. . . . Be it thy care to pronounce the sentence of anathema against that John, unless within three months he return to his holy mother, the Church of Rome and of York." That, of course, was on the argument that Scotland is part of England.

In 1138 Alberic, Bishop of Ostia, was sent by Innocent II as Legate to England and Scotland, and he recalled bishop John from the Monastery of Tiron, under threat of sentence. But John proved that "threatened men live long," and remained still obstinate till he obeyed the call that Popes and Archbishops cannot decline, passing to his rest at Melrose in 1147. It was written of him then that he was "a most intimate friend of King David of Scotland because of the excellence of his virtue." One feels that he had the king behind him, and, like the Scottish hierarchy of a later day, set patriotism before mere ecclesiastical obedience. His successor, Herbert, was consecrated Bishop of Glasgow by Pope Eugenius III at Auxerre; and in 1155 Pope Adrian IV wrote to the Bishops of Scotland, ordering obedience to Roger, Archbishop of York, as their metropolitan—with a threat! A year later, Roger of York set up the claim anew; but it was put aside, the Church of Scotland being declared subject only to the jurisdiction of Rome itself.

Again, in November 1159, we find Pope Alexander III writing to the clergy of St. Andrews, confirming the appointment of the new Bishop, if they unanimously agree in his selection, and the king gives his assent. In 1174, Bishop Herbert of Glasgow having died, Engleram, his successor,

was consecrated by Pope Adrian himself at Sens, though the messengers of Roger Archbishop of York very strongly opposed it. In the same year Jocelyn was elected Bishop of Glasgow at the people's request, and with consent of the king. He was confirmed by Pope Alexander III, and that he had great influence with the Pope was immediately felt.

In 1175, William the Lyon having submitted, for his life's sake, to the Treaty of Falaise, went to York with the Scots Bishops, peers, and freeholders, to do homage and obeisance to the English king. The Bishops and Abbots bound themselves by an oath to be subject to York, and to go thither for consecration when necessary. "Moreover," went on the settlement, "the King of England shall present the honours in Scotland episcopates, abbacies, and other honours—or, to say less, they shall be presented by his advice." Bishop Jocelyn of Glasgow was one of those present. The Bishops also swore that, if the king should break his agreements there made, they should place him under interdict with the whole land, till he came into agreement with the good pleasure of the King of England; also, that they should make subjection to the Church of England, as their predecessors were wont to make to that Church, and which they ought to make.

V

These last phrases were the gate through which the chariot with scythe blades was to drive; for, in 1176, to the Council at Northampton came King William of Scotland, by mandate of the English King, bringing with him Jocelyn Bishop of Glasgow, the Bishops of St. Andrews, Dunkeld, and Galloway, Caithness and Moray, and the abbots and priors, to make subjection to the Church of England. The King demanded of them that, by the faith which they owed him, and by the oath they had sworn, they should make to the Church of England the submission which they ought to make, and used to make, in the time of his predecessors. But they made answer that their predecessors never made any such subjection, and neither ought they. To this Roger, Archbishop of York, replied that the bishops of Scotland had done so, expressly the Bishop of Glasgow and others. But a dispute began between Canterbury and York, and that finished the Conference. There is sometimes a chance for truth in a triangular duel!

The Scottish bishops, however, sent a secret embassy to Pope Alexander III requesting his protection from the subjection which the English Church demanded of them. In July 1176 Pope Alexander wrote to the Scottish bishops: "Naturally it distresses you greatly—it distresses us also—that our dearest son in Christ, Henry, illustrious king of the English,

has compelled you to swear to obey the English Church, since this reflects injury toward God, and contempt for us, and is to the detriment of ecclesiastical liberty, which it is not for any king or prince to control with regard to churches or ecclesiastics. We refuse to permit that your liberty be diminished, and have straitly enjoined our venerable brother, the Archbishop of the Church of York, legate of the Apostolic See, not to exercise metropolitan right over you, until it be learned under examination of the Roman pontiff whether you owe subjection to him by metropolitan right. . . . We therefore command your fraternity, and enjoin that you attempt not to obey, as by metropolitan right, any but the Roman pontiff, by pretext of these oaths or for any other reason, until, in our presence or in that of our Catholic successor, if the aforesaid Archbishop wishes to drag you into court concerning this, the controversy between you and him be terminated by the proper decision."

Owing to the refusal of King William the Lyon to thrust out Hugh, his chaplain whom he had chosen for the Bishopric of St. Andrews, in favour of John Scott, who had been chosen by the Canons of St. Andrews, John having declined to declare Scotland's independence of either York or Canterbury, the king and land of Scotland were placed under the papal interdict by Roger of York by mandate of Pope Alexander. But neither the monarch or the land seem to have minded much. In 1182 Bishop Jocelyn, with others, secured absolution for the king and country by a visit to Rome. Hugh still held to his episcopate — passing through the alternation of deposition, excommunication, and absolution, till death stepped in, and, finally, in 1188, doubtless with a smile, deposed him from his quarrelsome throne by a breath of the pestilence at Rome in August. Death also got in amongst others, and with a freer field, came something like security.

In 1188 Pope Clement III wrote, clearly decreeing that "the Scottish Church owes subjection only to the Apostolic See, whose spiritual daughter she is, with mediation of none." It also was decreed that only the Roman pontiff, or a "Legate sent from his side," should pronounce sentence of interdict or excommunication upon the kingdom of Scotland, and, "if it be otherwise pronounced, it is declared invalid." Further, it is declared that none but a member of the kingdom of Scotland shall hereafter act as papal legate in Scotland, unless it be one specially sent from Rome. This blotted out the power of York and Canterbury who had so acted. Again, however, the clergy of St. Andrews were this year admonished to receive and obey John Scott as their Bishop; if they had made another election, the Pope demanded its annulment, under threat of eternal hell for disobedience. But the king appointed Roger; and, although John was himself present and had already been consecrated to the office by

three Popes, and had a letter from the present Pope with instructions, yet he held his peace.

The rights of the Pope himself were challenged in 1259, when Pope Alexander IV consecrated John de Cheyan to Glasgow; but he was unacceptable to the King and the Chapter, and though his Holiness refused to quash the appointment, the Bishop had to retire abroad. Again, in 1318, when John de Egglescliffe was consecrated to the See by command of the Pope, at the request of the King of England, Bruce protested. The Pope referred to "Robert, calling himself King of Scotland," but Bruce was resolute, ignoring the appointment, and John had to go to Ireland. In another matter, when Bruce presented prebendary John de Lindsay to the See of Glasgow, the Pope presented an Italian to the vacant prebend. But again Bruce held his own. His nominee was installed, and notwithstanding the arrival of the Pope's nominee, retained his seat. Such things could not go unobserved as the valuation in Scotland of a Papal edict.

Again, when a man indicted for murder pleaded in Inverness that he had received Papal absolution, the Regent Randolph said, "Nay, the Pope may absolve a man from the spiritual consequences of his sin, but the crime against the law of the land is another matter."

Bishop Cameron was elected by the Chapter without reference to the Pope, Martin V, who however confirmed the appointment.

The claims of superiority over the Scottish Church were contemporary with the claims over the Crown. They were based on the erroneous conclusion that the kings of England were in virtue of their sovereignty descendants of the Britons, whereas they were claims of invasion, as the purchaser of a castle might claim the ancestry of its ancient possessors, or as Henry II tried to do with the traditions of Wales, and as the English adopted Arthur, the enemy of their race, as an English hero.

The question of obedience rose as a mighty force out of all these things in the Wars of Independence, with Lamberton, Wishart, and Sinclair, and one can see their relation to the amazing landslide of the Church of Rome in Scotland, when the conquering fact of patriotism became a determining balance in the doom of that ancient Church at a later time.

